



PLAZA GREENING — New Brunswick's Railroad Plaza, now an asphalt slope between French Street and the railroad station, will have trees and benches, according to a preliminary plan of a Cook College landscape design class.

Cook students planning Railroad Plaza facelift

By **TED SERRILL**
Home News staff writer

NEW BRUNSWICK — A Cook College landscape design and architecture class is completing specific plans for the beautification of Railroad Plaza.

The plans, which call for elimination of billboards, large graphic designs, banners and construction of a treed pedestrian plaza with benches in front of the Penn Central Railroad Station, are to be furnished to the city administration by the end of the month.

The program was announced yesterday by New Brunswick Tomorrow and the city administration.

One anticipated feature of the improvements will be the painting of a large railroad locomotive on the railroad elevation, to the left of the police booth, replacing three advertising billboards now affixed to the elevation, said Business Administrator Paul J. Abdalla.

The state Department of Transportation this past fall completed the improvement of the intersection of Albany and French streets with Easton Avenue in front of the railroad station. The Albany Street traffic circle was replaced by an intersection regulated by traffic lights.

As part of the improvements, the state left a large asphalt pedestrian area in front of the station, where the



RAILROAD PLAZA LOGO — Cook College students have designed this logo for Railroad Plaza in downtown New Brunswick.

taxi stand had been located. The state originally had intended to develop a kind of mini-park in this area, but decided it did not have the legal authority, said Abdalla.

State officials have now reconsidered and find they do have right-of-way jurisdiction and are willing to develop the plaza with trees and benches, he said.

The beautification project was initiated by Abdalla, who asked New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT) to see what could be done to upgrade the aesthetics of the area at modest cost.

NBT's neighborhood preservation director, Dennis White, was assigned, and he brought in the class of 50 stu-

dents, whose instructor is Prof. Robert Butler. A previous Butler class designed and built a playground for pupils of the YWCA Day School in the Ascension Lutheran Church.

"We are not talking about large scale reconstruction, but rather doing the right thing in the right place," said White.

In addition to the landscaped pedestrian sitdown area in front of the station and replacing the billboards with a painting, student teams also made designs for a clearly defined pickup area for rail and bus passengers, a logo for the plaza, painting the French Street and Easton Avenue railroad overpasses with bright colors and provision of banners for stores in the vicinity.

A review committee late last month decided the students had accomplished a resourceful, imaginative first-rate professional job, said Abdalla.

He said the city would fund some of the work, such as the painting of the railroad elevations. Mayor Richard J. Mulligan has been concerned about improving the plaza, he said.

The administration, Abdalla said, hopes to persuade the United Billboard Co. to relocate its billboards. The O'Connell & Salisbury sign on the Easton Avenue elevation would be removed, if possible. The state would fund the plaza improvements, if it accepts cost estimates.

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